



MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
held Wednesday, November 4, 1998 with ACE and the Greenbelt Cluster.

The meeting began at 8:16 p.m. It was held in the Multi-Purpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Council members Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Alan Turnbull and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager and David E. Moran, City Clerk

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Leta Mach, Alla Lake, ACE Members; Dr. Gerrald Boarman, Sharon Walter, Kristen Pfeltz, Roosevelt Cluster of Schools and Mary Moien, New Review

Annual Report

Leta Mach began by reviewing ACE's 1997 Annual Report. She summarized the highlights including: that ACE gave out it's first scholarship, presented a forum on character education and continued to do it's perception of schools study.

Mayor Davis asked about any new plans for this year. Ms. Mach responded that a reception with principals and vice-principals was planned for this year. She also hoped to bring other educational advisory groups in the County together and perhaps develop a list of the Greenbelt schools' needs.

Mr. Roberts asked about ACE's review of the School Board Budget. Ms. Mach stated that one of the committee's position had been to support the repeal of TRIM. She noted that they would be willing to look at the budget more diligently if that were Council's desire.

Mayor Davis asked about brochure distribution. Ms. Mach responded that brochures are distributed at the Labor Day Festival and other functions. She requested that Council approach local businesses to solicit donations to the ACE scholarship fund. Mayor Davis suggested that ACE place their brochure at the Library and other public locations.

Greenbelt Schools Study

Ms. Mach described the process for completing the study. Ms. Mach stated that ACE started the study so that attention could be focused specifically on Greenbelt schools. She noted that scores at Greenbelt Elementary had dropped from the previous years.

Ms. Mach noted that the data came from the Maryland State School Performance Report and fact book.

Mr. Putens asked about the large teacher turnover at both Middle schools. Ms. Mach responded that Countywide there was a large teacher turnover. Mayor Davis noted that Countywide salary was an issue.

Mr. Turnbull stated that he believes it's bad science to compare one class to another class, but rather believed we should be tracking individual children to see what they are learning. He asked if there was another way to use the data and analyze it differently. Dr. Boarman believed Mr. Turnbull was correct and that a number of factors were not being considered. Dr. Boarman referenced a Prince George's County study that illustrated that our minority children score higher than minority children in other Counties. He noted that the State was not interested in this issue.

Mr. Turnbull believed that the City could use this information to its advantage regardless of how the information is used by the State. Mayor Davis noted there is significant turnover between classes and very often the same students that were in 3rd grade are not in the fifth grade, making it difficult to track students from grade to grade.

Mayor Davis expressed concern about falling scores at Greenbelt Elementary. Dr. Boarman stated that there had been demographic changes at Greenbelt Elementary. He also noted that there are some disruptive children at the school and there has been some teacher turnover. Dr. Boarman stressed that teacher compensation was a serious need. He suggested that there was a lack of qualified teachers and suggested that the State should consider hiring retired teachers and give them a full salary plus their retirement benefits. He noted this would require State legislation.

Mr. Putens suggested incentives that attract teachers in certain subject areas or localities. Mr. Roberts believed there needed to be a mechanism to retain teachers. Mayor Davis noted that in the new contract there was bonus for teachers who stay with the system. She believed that increasing disciplinary problems were also a factor in teacher retention. Mr. Putens suggested that the city would be willing to support legislative initiatives that might help this situation and asked Dr. Boarman to keep the city advised of these initiatives.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested that if Council wanted, they could add this issue to the upcoming Legislative Dinner. Dr. Boarman noted that they were not getting a good applicant pool for vacant positions. He also noted that there were significant problems in the System=s Personnel office.

Mayor Davis asked about the effects of the elimination of busing on the cluster. Dr. Boarman referenced a recent report and noted that Eleanor Roosevelt was slated to lose 1,000 students as of the year 2000, but expressed concern about the loss of 300 "science and tech" children. He noted that while he wanted to reduce the size of the

population, he was concerned about the drastic loss of teachers. Mr. Putens asked for a copy of the report.

Dr. Boarman noted that other schools in the system do not want Eleanor Roosevelt to succeed because it is so far ahead of the other schools. He noted that Roosevelt was 68% minority and had national recognition, but was often played down in the County. Ms. Mach hoped that Roosevelt could be raised as a model for other schools. Mr. Turnbull asked if the perception was all "science and tech" programs or just Roosevelt's. Dr. Boarman noted it was just Roosevelt because Roosevelt really stands out nationally. He stressed that Springhill Lake Elementary was well on it's way to being improved.

Mr. Turnbull expressed concern about the provision that allows elementary school children to get special placement based on day care provisions. Mr. Putens suggested that Dr. Boarman make a presentation to the 4-Cities Coalition. In response to a question from Mr. Turnbull, Ms. Walter explained the character education program slated to begin next year. She explained that it would become a permanent part of the Cluster's program.

Mr. Turnbull hoped that the city and the Cluster could work together and involve the greater community. He referenced the situation at Roosevelt Center as an example. Dr. Boarman expressed support and appreciation for the School Resource Officer program and reported that it had made a tremendous difference at Roosevelt. Dr. Boarman also thanked ACE for their efforts.

Field Lights at Roosevelt

Dr. Boarman stressed that it was Roosevelt's intention to fully cooperate with the community. He stressed that Ms. Clem had met with community representatives and that it was planned to create a permanent community advisory board to advise Roosevelt on the use of lights and other issues.

Dr. Boarman stated that the fields with lights in the County are not averaging high attendance at night games. He stressed that the need was practice related not game related. Mayor Davis suggested that the parents group reach out to the community associations for a status report and she suggested a letter go out to the associations.

Council asked about the meeting regarding lights. Dr. Boarman responded that he was not aware of any meeting and stated that no decisions about lights had been made and that the money wasn't there yet either.

Mr. Roberts raised a concern brought up by a resident about kids in Lakeside North walking to Greenbelt Elementary. Dr. Boarman suggested that the resident contact Ms. Creek at the school bus lot or call him.

Council thanked Dr. Boarman for attending.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David E. Moran

City Clerk